

Southern Plains Drought Outlook Summary

**Thursday, March 20th
Issued: 2:30pm CDT**

National Weather Service

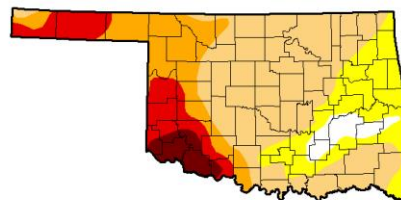
***Southern Region Headquarters
Regional Operations Center
Fort Worth, TX***

Current Drought Situation

- Oklahoma** The amount of OK in extreme drought has tripled since January 1st.
- New Mexico** Jan/Feb 2014 was the driest since 1895. Amount of NM in extreme drought has increased six fold since January 1st.
- Texas** Jan/Feb 2014 was the 5th driest going back to 1895. Amount of TX in extreme drought has more than doubled since January 1st.

U.S. Drought Monitor Oklahoma

March 18, 2014
(Released Thursday, Mar. 20, 2014)
Valid 7 a.m. EDT



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)						
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4	
Current	4.05	95.95	77.25	30.25	14.72	4.07	
Last Week 3/11/2014	0.00	100.00	80.67	31.42	14.67	4.40	
3 Months Ago 12/18/2013	49.22	50.78	38.65	18.99	4.92	2.40	
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	50.84	49.16	38.17	18.99	4.84	2.40	
Start of Water Year 10/1/13	21.74	78.26	43.00	17.62	4.42	1.45	
One Year Ago 3/18/13	0.00	100.00	100.00	83.07	53.11	9.71	

Intensity

D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought
D2 Severe Drought	

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:
Eric Luebbehusen
U.S. Department of Agriculture



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

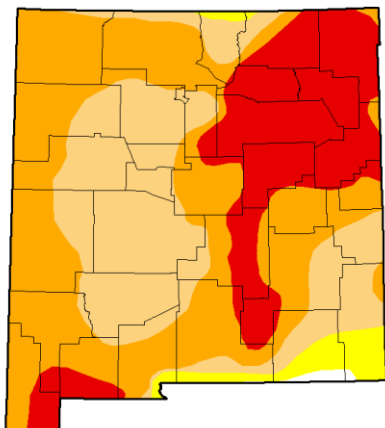
For Southern Plains Drought Monitor go to:
<http://www.drought.gov/drought/regional-programs/southernplains/southern-plains-home>

Current/Ongoing Drought Impacts

- New Mexico:** Despite near record September wetness, 3 of the 4 largest reservoirs remain 15% or less of storage capacity. The largest, Elephant Butte, is at only 15% of capacity.
- Texas:** Long-term (hydrologic) drought remains for the state as a whole. Statewide reservoir capacity is only at 64% of capacity, the lowest ever for this time of year since 1990. Water releases to rice farmers in Lower Colorado River cut off for third straight year. Persistent drought in northwest TX has resulted in the City of Wichita Falls declaring Stage 4 Drought Disaster water restrictions.
- Oklahoma:** Lake Altus in southwest Oklahoma at less than 12% of capacity.

U.S. Drought Monitor New Mexico

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	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)						
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4	
Current	9.40	90.60	95.60	64.87	23.44	0.00	
Last Week 3/11/2014	0.40	99.60	95.60	64.86	23.27	0.00	
3 Months Ago 12/18/2013	0.08	99.92	76.91	36.33	3.96	0.00	
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	0.39	99.61	75.21	32.68	3.96	0.00	
Start of Water Year 10/1/13	1.05	98.94	74.92	37.81	3.39	0.00	
One Year Ago 3/18/13	0.23	99.77	98.47	89.85	49.95	4.25	

Intensity

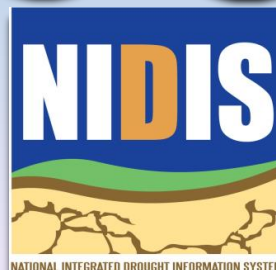
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D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought
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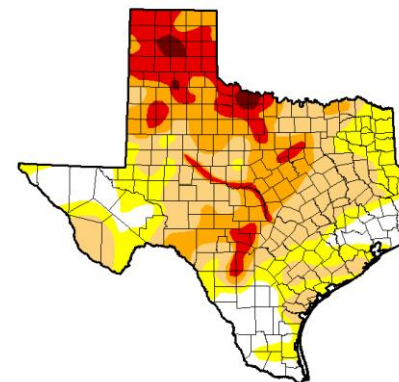


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U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

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	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)						
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4	
Current	15.24	84.76	64.20	33.18	14.06	1.41	
Last Week 3/11/2014	15.44	84.56	62.80	34.39	11.46	1.49	
3 Months Ago 12/18/2013	25.80	74.20	46.80	22.74	6.71	1.17	
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	28.48	71.52	43.84	21.15	5.82	0.79	
Start of Water Year 10/1/13	6.62	93.38	70.95	25.08	4.01	0.12	
One Year Ago 3/18/13	3.64	96.36	85.02	59.53	28.30	9.88	

Intensity

D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought
D2 Severe Drought	

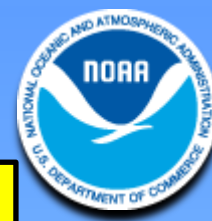
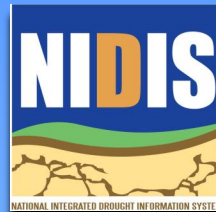
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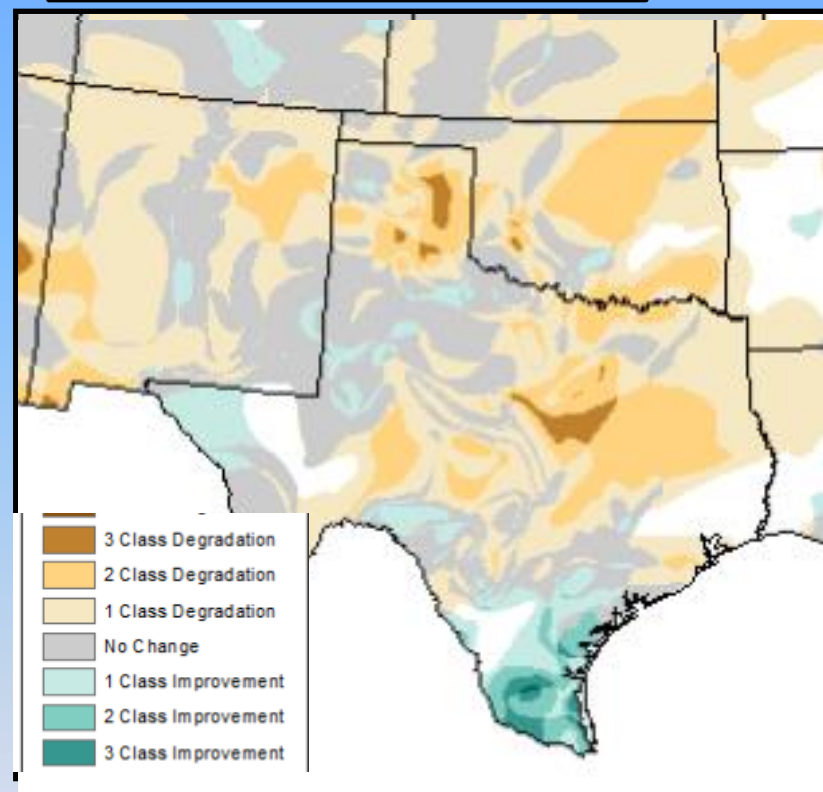
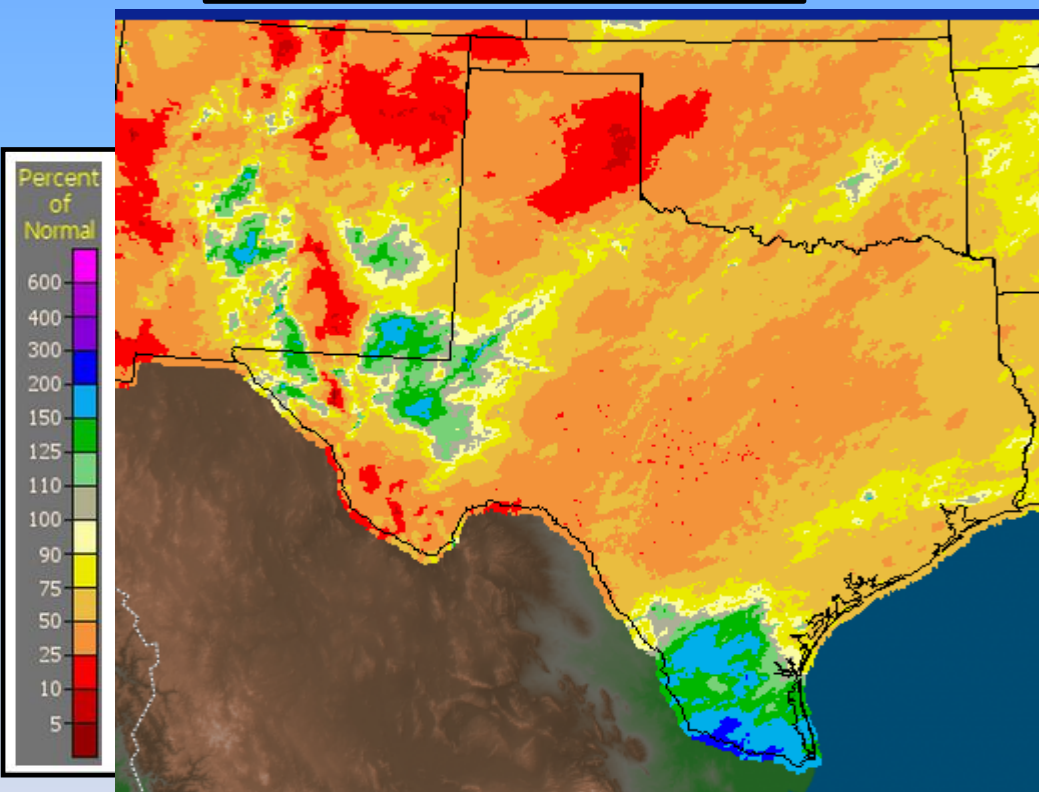
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Website: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov> **Twitter:** @NWS_Southern_US
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Percent of Normal Precipitation
Over the Past 3 Months
(Since December 24, 2013)

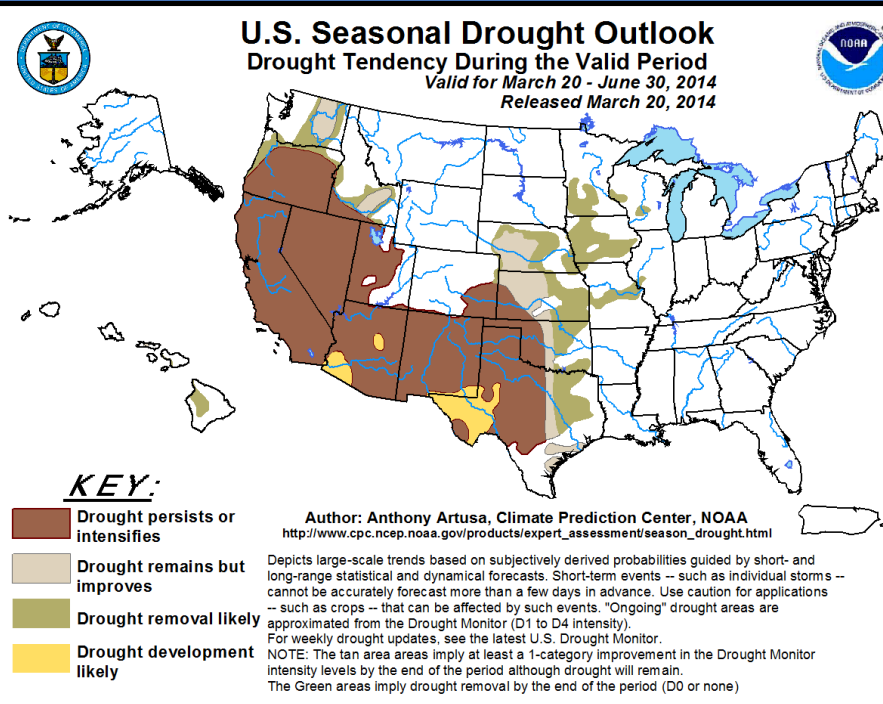
Change in the Drought
Over the Past 3 Months
(Since December 24, 2013)



Overall, all 3 states experienced a much drier than normal winter (except for Deep South TX and portions of Far West TX), with NM experiencing its 3rd driest winter since 1895 and TX its 10th driest, which has resulted in general worsening of drought conditions heading into the all important spring months. On average, rainfall amounts in TX and OK increase dramatically in the spring. Seeing at least normal rainfall in TX and OK by the end of June will be critical in averting continued worsening of drought conditions.

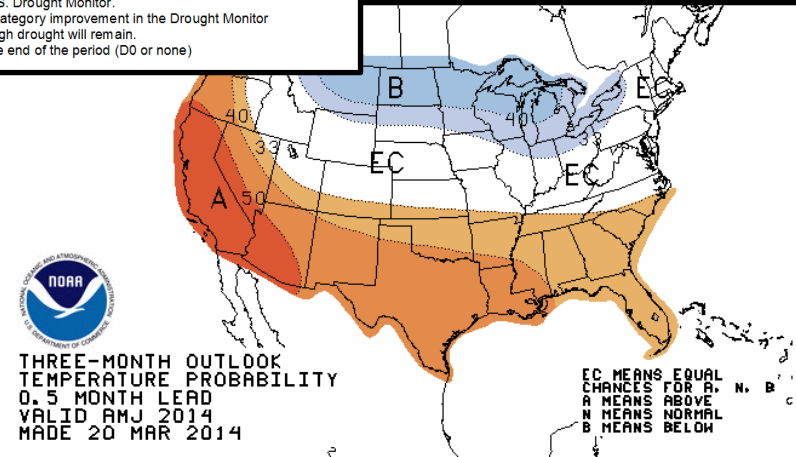
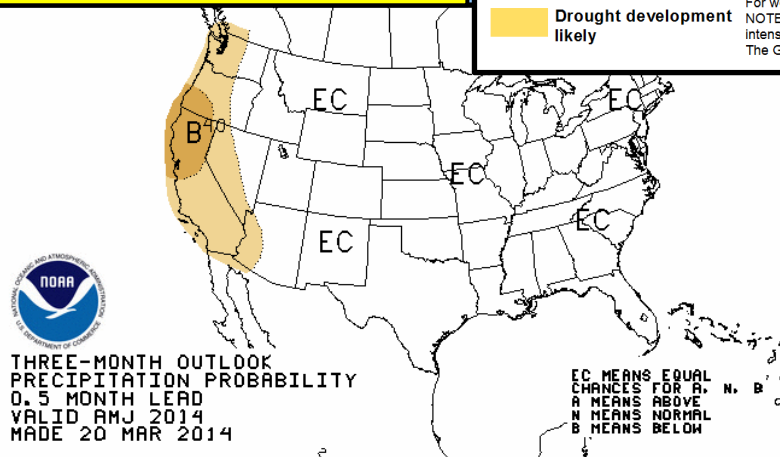
3-month Outlook Precipitation

- Equal chances of below, above, or near normal precipitation expected across all 3 states.
- Generally, the spring months are relatively dry for NM. Usually, TX and OK see significant increases in rain during May.
- High probability of drought redeveloping and/or worsening across NM and west TX and western OK.



3-month Outlook Temperature

- Increased chances for above normal temperatures for all of TX/NM/OK.
- Increased Evaporation of any rain that does fall is likely with higher temperatures ... further exacerbating surface reservoir water deficits.



Southern Plains Drought Summary

- Jan/Feb was very dry, with NM having its driest ever since 1895, and OK and TX having their 4th and 5th driest respectively.
- Drought to persist or worsen in NM and much of west TX and western OK.
- Experimental forecast guidance from NOAAs Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences suggests a 60% likelihood of El Nino by the end of summer.

Website: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov>

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Information provided by:
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This information along with other drought
resources also available on the
Southern Plains drought.gov web portal

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